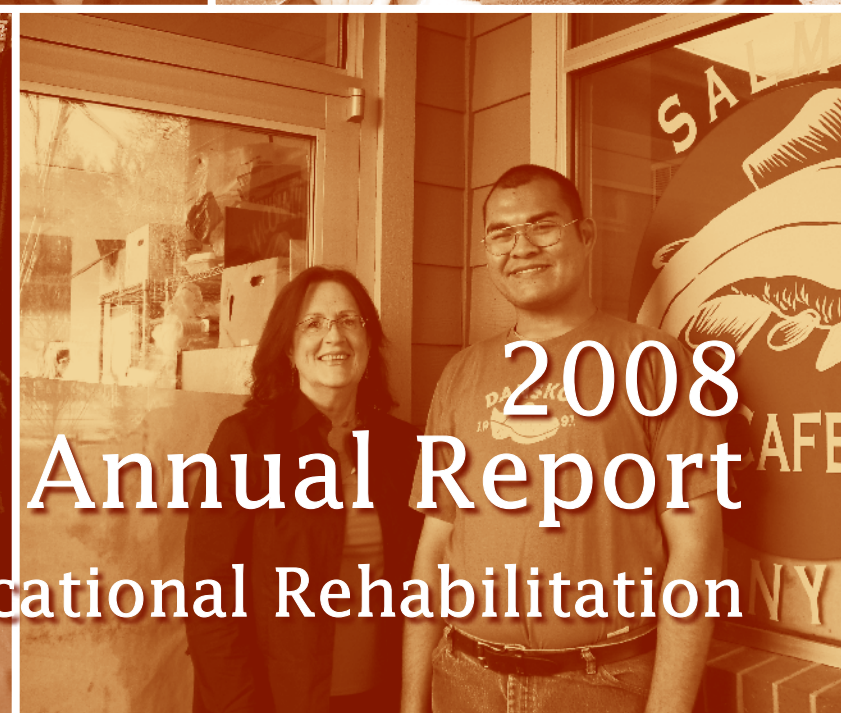


Working In Washington



2008
Annual Report
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Director's Message

Director's Message

By Lynnae Rutledge, Director

I am delighted to welcome you to our 2008 Annual Report. This has been a remarkable year for our Division. In February our staff achieved something that was long overdue. Through hard work and determination of DVR employees and by leveraging resources with our federal, state and local partners, the Division put an end to the waiting list for services. The results for our customers for 2008 are nothing short of extraordinary. We increased our rehabilitation rate by investing in our employees with targeted training and skill development.

As you read the success stories in the Annual Report, I know that you too will be proud of and impressed with the accomplishments of our customers. The launch of our customer internship program offers us an opportunity to connect with both public and private sector employers in a new and exciting way.

The State Rehabilitation Council continues to play an essential role in strengthening the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program. The Council has been a key partner in asking questions that we carefully consider as we create policies and practices to assist more customers to go to work. We at the Division appreciate the Council's contribution to our success.



The DVR Mission:

To empower individuals
with disabilities to achieve
a greater quality of life by
obtaining and maintaining
employment.

WE DID IT!

By Kathy Krulich, DVR Executive Assistant

Making a difference in the lives of those we serve, people with disabilities, is our passion. It is inspiring and satisfying to be part of the growth and success of the people who enter our doors with employment hopes and are able to realize those hopes. However, since 2000, it had been very disheartening to tell our customers that they would have to wait, sometimes years, to get services. Each year having a wait list took an enormous toll on our staff's morale. Each year of waiting added to the growing frustration of our customers.

The situation seemed endless until late 2005 when Lynnae Ruttledge came to Washington DVR with a single goal and focus – eliminate the wait list. There was an incredible amount of work to be done as processes and systems were evaluated and streamlined.

Momentum and hope grew as staff and partners rallied behind this vision. On February 11, 2008 – WE DID IT!—the very last person was taken off our wait list. The banner you see in the photo was signed by many of our staff as it traveled with Lynnae to our field offices in celebration that week. Each employee also received a thank you letter from Governor Gregoire.

Special Acknowledgements

Thank you, to each and every one of our staff. This was our biggest team effort and our greatest accomplishment. We could not have done this without your effort, perseverance and dedication.

Thank you, to all our customers for your patience. We look forward to serving you and hope to see your success stories in future DVR annual reports!



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Michele Appell

By Lisa Fox at Eastside Employment Services

Behind the scenes at the IKON/Starbucks corporate office in Seattle, you will find a very enthusiastic and reliable, Michele Appell. With the job placement and coaching assistance of Eastside Employment Services, Michele has thrived working at IKON/Starbucks.

Michele is an individual with significant cognitive impairments and epilepsy. She applied for DVR services in February 2008 after receiving notice that her job was being eliminated. Michele was open to a career change and did not consider the lay-off as a frustrating setback. Michele had previously received job coaching and placement services through Eastside Employment Services and job coach, Lisa Fox, knew exactly the work and environment Michele needed.

When Michele's job ended in March 2008, Eastside Employment Services was quick to find a new full-time position at the IKON/Starbucks. They provided intensive job coaching services to help Michele learn new duties and negotiate her new environment. Although the transition was difficult at first, Michele adapted well to her new duties and environment with the tools and ideas that Eastside Employment Services provided. Lisa continued to check on Michele's progress to ensure that she gained independence in her work skills.

Michele is caring, dependable and a fast learner who is willing to do her best every day. She enjoys her job and her co-workers enjoy working with her. Michele says "I am proud I can do my job independently."

Her sparkling personality, compassionate heart, and strong work ethic have enabled Michele to excel at IKON/Starbucks. Lisa says, "Michele is a woman who has a lot of courage, is a hard worker, and is a strong asset to her employer."



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March 2009

Katie Chase

By Louise Goodman, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

It is a pleasure to introduce Katie Chase, Outreach Coordinator for Ballard Community Center Parks and Recreation and the driving force of "Team Katie." Katie was introduced to DVR services in 2006 while attending a School to Work program at Summit High School. The program is a partnership between King County Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), DVR and King County schools.

Katie has Cerebral Palsy and experiences huge challenges in all physical areas and speech and uses the help of a personal assistant to live and work. "Team Katie" was created through partnering with DVR, King County DDD, the state Division of Developmental Disabilities, ENSO, Summit High School, Washington Assistive Technology Alliance, and Debbie—Katie's very proactive mother. The team's mission statement says it all: "Team Katie is an organization set up to help create positive community perception of cerebral palsy and other disabilities through community projects."

**March is National
Traumatic Brain
Injury Awareness
Month.**

In addition to assistive technology, office equipment and training by Bill Youngman, DVR Assistive Technology specialist, Katie received counseling and guidance, services coordination, benefits planning, and help locating other resources. After receiving a year of DVR services, Katie was hired by the Ballard Community Center as an outreach coordinator. She designs event fliers and is involved with public relations at community events. Team Katie promoted the annual Daddy-Daughter Dinner Dance and the April Pool Day event and has applied for a grant to design a garden area accessible to individuals with disabilities. Team Katie publishes a regular newsletter and is working on a video.

Team Katie is a dynamic force in the Ballard Community and creates opportunities for people with disabilities to be active.



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Paul Collins

By Marcia Farrell, Vocational Rehabilitation Lead Counselor

Paul has extensive experience working with and training dogs, and this expertise turned his passion into a successful business.

Paul experienced an on-the-job injury in 2002. With back injuries and post-traumatic stress preventing him from returning to his former work, Paul applied for DVR services in 2005 and pursued certification as a canine handler while waiting for DVR services. Paul met Zena, a Belgian Malinois mold-detecting canine, while training with the World Detector Dog Organization and developed the business idea of Enviro-Clean Northwest.

Paul presented his idea to Marcia Farrell, his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. With DVR's help Paul created his company for detecting toxic mold in homes and businesses. Toxic molds, prevalent in Western Washington, can cause a wide range of serious medical conditions and, in extreme cases, can be deadly. Often, toxic molds are "hidden" in wall cavities and other places not detectable by humans -- enter Zena with her trained nose. Mold detection can save a home or business owner the time and expense of "searching blind" for dangerous molds.

Zena alerts Paul when she detects mold. Paul can then identify where the mold "lives" and take samples for analysis by a certified laboratory. Enviro-Clean Northwest is off to a great start. Paul is also pursuing certification as a Certified Mold Inspector that will allow him to expand his expertise to analyzing molds and enhance his earning potential.

Paul and Zena are teamwork *extraordinaire*! They are hard working partners in this unusual business and close companions away from work. Zena is not only "man's best friend" but also in this case, man's best co-worker!



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George Cruz

By Kelly Townsend, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

Meet George Cruz – a young man with a winning personality.

George applied for DVR services in 2007 as a transition student in his final year at Bainbridge Island High School. George teamed with DVR, Bainbridge Island High School staff and Mike Elliott of the Division of Developmental Disabilities to prepare for life after high school. George and the team felt that gaining work experience before he left school would help him learn about work and gain basic skills. While still in school, George worked as a kitchen assistant in a retirement home and delivered newspapers.

George was interested in finding permanent work as he approached graduation. DVR connected George with Barbara Rinehardt, Co-Director of Pathways to Employment, to help him find a satisfying, long term job. George's outgoing personality quickly won people over, but he struggled with ongoing job performance. Barbara Rinehardt met with the owner of Bainbridge Island's Salmon Canyon Café to introduce the idea of hiring George. George has flourished at the café and has increased his hours in the last year from 5 hours per week with 1:1 support to 20 hours per week with mostly natural supports.

George's journey to employment demonstrates the importance of fully exploring and understanding an individual's strengths, needs, and addressing barriers to employment. Once George's barriers were addressed constructively and the needed supports were in place, he was able to perform his job well and the Café gained a valued employee.



DVR client George Cruz with Barbara Rinehardt, co-director of Pathways to Employment, in front of the Salmon Canyon Café on Bainbridge Island.

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Bergen Delisi

By Adriana Tossini, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

Bergen Delisi is an amazing man with many dreams and accomplishments. Bergen is developmentally delayed and experiences receptive/expressive language impairments. He communicates via computer and text messaging – sending more than 2000 text messages monthly. He lives independently in an apartment with a long time friend, is a steward in the community and active participant in Special Olympics. With support from the King County Division of Developmental Disabilities, Bergen started a business with three friends with developmental disabilities. The business, nationally recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor - Employment and Training Administration, organizes social events for young adults with developmental disabilities.

To help Bergen gain work experience and computer skills, DVR supported an internship with a local research company. While working part-time, Bergen attended Bellevue Community College and completed the Office Assistant and Business Software Specialist Certificates. He was one of the first students in the Occupational and Life Skills Associate of Arts Degree—Venture Program for diverse learners at Bellevue Community College. In his last year at college, Bergen interned at the University of Washington and SKILLS, Inc.

Through the efforts of Scott Heartfield with the University of Washington Employment and Training Program and Diane King with Mainstay, Bergen was hired as an Office Maintenance Aide with full benefits in a supported employment position by the City of Seattle Department of Personnel. Among other office tasks, Bergen develops spread sheets, collects and inputs information into a data base, drafts and sends email, and saves files to a hard drive.

It's just a matter of time before Bergen accomplishes his next dream—he's an amazing person.



Bergen Delisi with his Mainstay job coach, Diane King (standing) and Heather Weldon, manager of supported employment at the City of Seattle.

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Washington State Rehabilitation Council

By Joelle Brouner, Executive Director

Washington State Rehabilitation Council members salute the staff of DVR for the remarkable progress made in 2008. In 2008, council members donated 1,250 hours of service to the policy partnership we have with DVR. Here are some of the DVR issues the Council examined over the past year.

- Community Rehabilitation Programs capacity to provide bilingual/bicultural services;
- Improving services to Latino or Hispanic customers and services to students transitioning from high school to work or higher education;
- Finalizing of an interagency agreement with higher education partners;
- Veterans' issues and revision of the interagency agreement with the Veterans Administration.
- Strategies used to gain public feedback.
- Held four customer forums in the locations of each of our quarterly meetings;
- Co-sponsored forums to seek input or strategies on DVR's State Plan;
- Laid the groundwork for a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment in partnership with DVR;
- Reviewed monthly data trend and performance measuring reports.

We look forward to contributing to the success of the Division and its customers in 2009.



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Zane Graser

By Zane Graser and Barbara Gale, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

When Zane came to DVR in December 2000, he didn't know what possibilities were in store for him. Zane began losing his hearing as a young child and has been deaf most of his life. He had a lifelong passion for sports and envisioned being a coach in an elementary or high school. With DVR's support, Zane attended Western Oregon University, pursuing studies in Physical Education in Teaching with a minor in Special Education and Vocational Rehabilitation. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree.

After graduation, Zane was hired as a Recreation Specialist by the Department of Corrections and works at the Washington State Reformatory in Monroe. As Recreation Specialist, Zane manages the music program and the hobby shop, including ceramics, woodworking, glasswork, leather working, and Native crafts. Zane is also in charge of family and cultural events and plans games and fun events for families who are visiting parents at the prison. He organizes an annual Christmas family event to collect toy donations for children and quarterly fundraisers to purchase outside food for participating inmates and to donate to Wishing Star Foundation. Zane is responsible for event logistics and ensuring security procedures are followed at all times.

Zane works hard to make the recreation program at the Reformatory the best it can be. He has earned a high level of respect for his expertise and fairness and is a great example of courage and self-determination. Zane navigates a potentially dangerous work environment very well—serving others, communicating creatively, encouraging self-exploration and expression. Zane says, "Overall, I love my job—there is always something different every day which keeps it interesting."



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Abbie Hudosh

By Kelly Townsend, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

After moving to Washington State from California in 2004, Abbie Hudosh applied for services with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). By participating in several community-based assessments, DVR determined that Abbie would be more successful if she improved her communication and work skills before continuing with DVR services. She was referred to the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and was able to build her skills in a group supported employment position. Then, in January 2007, Abbie reapplied for DVR services to explore competitive employment in the community.

Abbie requested to work with Community Rehabilitation Provider Jennifer White, owner of Able Opportunities. Jennifer White has extensive experience working with individuals with communication limitations and she agreed to assist Abbie achieve her goal of competitive employment. Jennifer evaluated Abbie's ability to work competitively and then provided one-on-one services and support. In May 2007, Abbie was hired by Harrison Medical Center as a stock clerk.

Within two months, Abbie was performing her work consistently, was confident in her skills and was getting along well with her co-workers. Abbie has proven to be a valued and reliable worker, eagerly showing up for work every day. Co-workers especially appreciate Abbie's humor and her desire to learn new tasks. By demonstrating her reliability and strong work skills, Abbie has set a goal to increase her work hours in the near future.

Working in partnership with DDD and Community Rehabilitation partners is one way DVR can support our customers to succeed. Our collective efforts are especially worthwhile when working with a motivated, positive individual like Abbie.



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October 2009

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Vicki Rich

By Gail Besel, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

Vicki Rich applied for services through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in September, 2002 and received numerous primary and support services while attending Yakima Valley Community College. She completed her Associates of Arts degree in 2008 and became employed as a Peer Counselor/ Case Manager Assistant with Central Washington Comprehensive Mental Health.

Vicki's first visit to DVR was encouraged by the local "Drug Court". She was selected to participate in the Co-Occurring Disorders diversion program managed through Central Washington Comprehensive Mental Health, the Yakima County Department of Corrections, Yakima County Sheriff's Department, Yakima Police Department, and the Yakima Prosecutor's office. The program diverts mentally ill offenders with eligible felony charges from jail and into treatment. While participating in this treatment, Vicki learned about community resources that could help her and others and became the "client representative" of the "Crisis Intervention Team".

Vicki is continuing her education and has plans to get her doctorate degree. She is raising four children including one with special needs. As a member of the "Crisis Intervention Team" and "Behavioral Health Diversion" program she speaks to law enforcement and probation services staff about understanding mental illness and co-occurring client behaviors. She also instructs officers in de-escalation techniques to diffuse difficult situations.

Vicki has turned a very difficult life into a life of service. She is truly an amazing woman.



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Jessie Rodney

By Arlana Nelsen, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and
Eddi Schumacher, Rehabilitation Technician

Jessie Rodney has turned a difficult life into a blessing for his community and his family. Jessie is the fifth of eight children to parents who both struggled with alcoholism. As a result, Jessie was introduced to substance abuse early in life. By the time he was a teenager he was using pretty heavily and associating with people who sold drugs. His lifestyle eventually led to incarceration.

Jessie began straightening out his life long before coming to DVR in 2008. He wanted to get a cosmetology license and became aware of significant learning disabilities getting in the way. Although DVR arranged for tutoring, Jessie repeatedly failed the required medical terminology test. With lots of counseling, perseverance and continued focus on his vocational goal, Jessie secured his license and landed a position at a local salon. Shortly after starting to work, the salon owner moved on and Jessie had an opportunity to assume ownership of the business. Now Jessie is the proud owner of R and R Specialties. The R and R stands for his childhood nickname "Ray Ray."

Because of Jessie's past experiences, he learned the value and importance of reaching out to others. He is involved in Alcoholic Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous youth clubs, he encourages and mentors young people to pursue a clean and sober life. He also provides outreach to Thunderbird Treatment Facility, Pioneer Treatment Facility and is involved in the Reynolds Work Release program. Jessie also gives individuals newly released from incarceration a free haircut.

Jessie enjoys time with his wife and children, family and friends, his 89-year-old Uncle, "Pops" and his dog, Redbone.



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Gordon Scott

By Gil Cupat, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

Meet Alexander “Gordon” Scott, an inspiring and impressive man of great character who thrives in his life. In 2004, Gordon was preparing to travel through Europe before entering the University of Edinburgh’s MBA program. However, his full and busy life with wife Kristen and their daughter took an unexpected turn following a tragic skiing accident in Colorado. The injury Gordon experienced resulted in quadriplegia and in an instant, all Gordon’s dreams were gone and he began an arduous undertaking to reconstruct his life. He was determined to adapt, thrive and succeed. His wife and daughter gave him the motivation he needed for that long and difficult journey.

Gordon applied for services at North Seattle DVR in July 2005. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Gil Cupat worked with Gordon over the next three years to help him prepare for employment. Gordon’s van was modified by Absolute Mobility and he learned to drive again by attending driver’s training at the University of Washington.

Gordon and Gil evaluated Social Security Disability Insurance coverage to ensure his benefits were maximized and several wheelchair repairs were paid for while waiting for Medicare benefits to kick in. Most importantly, DVR supported Gordon’s long-term goal of achieving an MBA through enrollment at the University of Washington. Gordon graduated with honors and was chosen by peers as student speaker at the commencement ceremony.

Immediately after graduating, Gordon was offered a great position at Atlas API as a Program Manager. He has a bright future with a career path leading to personal, financial and professional success. His strength of character and “never-give-up” attitude is an inspiration to everyone he meets.



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Acknowledgements

Special thanks to all the DVR Staff for the contributions of stories and ideas to this year's annual report. Thank you to all DVR staff for the work they do every day to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

No person, because of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, creed, or disability shall be discriminated against in employment, services, or any aspect of the program's activities.

This policy is consistent with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1972, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1967, Executive Order 11246 as amended by Executive Order 11375, the Civil Rights Act of 1992, Governor's Executive Order 93-07, and the Washington State Law Against Discrimination, Chapter 49.60 RCW.

Sources of Revenue

Federal Fiscal Year 2007

Total: \$50,214,128



Expenditures

Federal Fiscal Year 2008

Total: \$50,579,633



Average Earnings

Federal Fiscal Year 2008

Average annual earnings of customers before and after rehabilitation.

**Before
\$2,740**



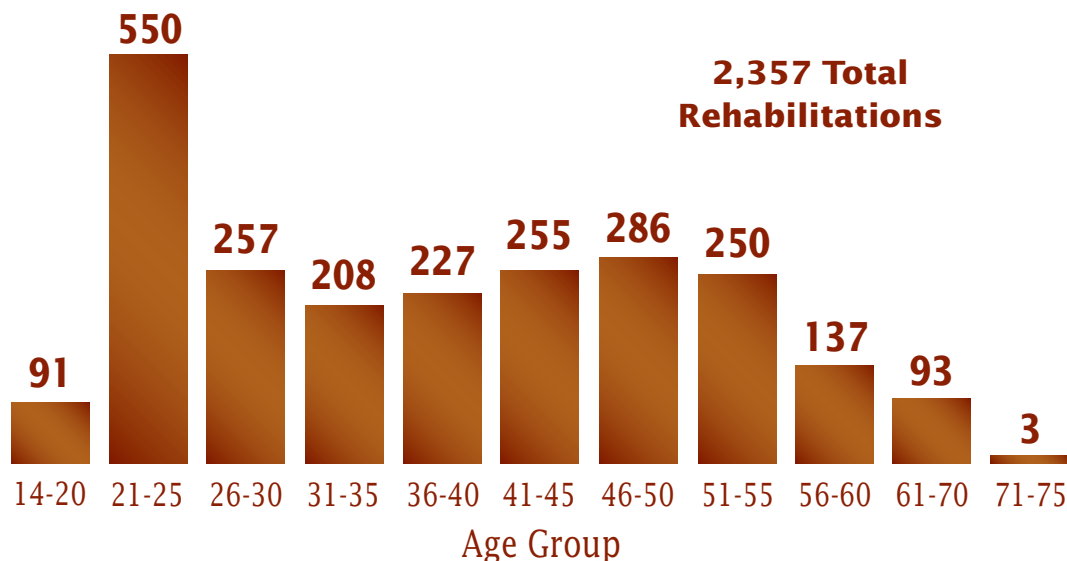
**After
\$16,500**



Ages of Customers

Federal Fiscal Year 2008

Total number of customers successfully rehabilitated in various age groups.



Types of Disabilities

Federal Fiscal Year 2008

Types of disabilities of rehabilitated customers.

